

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KABUL 02530 01 OF 02 131654Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08
DHA-02 MCT-01 /086 W
-----131827Z 056706 /40

R 130742Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2206
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 2530

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AF
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE GHAZI FAMILY CONFRONTATION WITH DAOUD
PALACE GUARD

REF: TEHRAN 2901

1. SUMMARY. SEVERAL RECENT REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE LONG-FERMENTING GHAZI FAMILY CONTEMPT FOR CERTAIN OF DAOUD'S CLOSEST AIDES MAY HAVE ERUPTED INTO AN OPEN STRUGGLE WITHIN THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. A REPORTED PLAN TO TRANSFER THE AFGHAN AIR AUTHORITY (HEADED BY SULTAN MAHMOUD GHAZI) TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE UNDER SYED ABDULILAH (WHO IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS THE PRIME BETE NOIR AMONG DAOUD'S AIDES AS FAR AS THE GHAZIS ARE CONCERNED) HAS PROMPTED SULTAN MAHMOUD TO THREATEN HIS RESIGNATION, AND TO LOUDLY DENIGRATE SEVERAL OF DAOUD'S CLOSEST ADVISORS. AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME, GHAZI'S FULMINATIONS AGAINST ABDULILAH, ET AL, PROBABLY EXTENDED BEYOND MERE PIQUE AT THE PROSPECT OF LOSING A BUREAUCRATIC TUSSE AND COULD REFLECT GENUINE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DAOUD'S METHODS OF RUNNING THE COUNTRY. FOR HIS PART, DAOUD WILL PROBABLY LET THE GHAZIS STEW FOR AWHILE, BUT IT IS LIKELY THAT HE WOULD SACRIFICE SOME OF HIS LESS TALENTED ENTOURAGE SHOULD THE GHAZIS VIEWS BECOME MORE WIDESPREAD THROUGH ZCGHAN SOCIETY.
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PAGE 02 KABUL 02530 01 OF 02 131654Z

END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR ZELMAI GHAZI'S REFERENCE (REFTEL) TO HIS DIFFERENCES WITH CERTAIN CLOSE DAOUD AIDES MESHES WITH OTHER RECENT REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD WHICH INDICATE THAT THE LARGE AND INFLUENTIAL GHAZI BRANCH OF THE MOHAMMADZAI CLAN MIGHT BE PASSING THROUGH A PERIOD OF POLITICAL DISFAVOR AND/OR DISCONTENT.

THE DISCONTENT HAS BEEN SIMMERING FOR A LONG TIME AND APPEARS TO HAVE STEMMED ORIGINALLY FROM SULTAN MAHMOUD GHAZI'S (ZELMAI'S BROTHER AND PRESIDENT OF THE AFGHAN AIR AUTHORITY) DISLIKE OF, EVEN CONTEMPT FOR, SEVERAL OF DAOUD'S CLOSEST ADVISORS, ESPECIALLY MINISTER OF FINANCE ABDULILAH.

3. THIS GHAZI RESENTMENT APPARENTLY HAS LED TO AN OPEN STRUGGLE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY WHICH SULTAN MAHMOUD SEEMS TO BE LOSING. WE HAVE RECENTLY HEARD THAT A PLAN EXISTS, AND ACCORDING TO SOME VERSIONS ONLY AWAITS DAOUD'S SIGNATURE, TO TRANSFER THE AFGHAN AIR AUTHORITY, WHICH SULTAN MAHMOUD HEADS, INTO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE UNDER ABDULILAH. THE AUTHORITY PREVIOUSLY WAS RESPONSIBLE TO THE PRIME MINISTRY WHICH HAS BEEN ABOLISHED UNDER THE NEW CONSTITUTION. DAOUD HIMSELF WAS THE PRIME MINISTER. MAHMOUD GHAZI HAS LET IT BE KNOWN FAIRLY WIDELY THAT HE WOULD FIND SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT -- WHICH, WE PRESUME, MUST HAVE HAD DAOUD'S PRIOR APPROVAL -- UNTENABLE, AND HE HAS LOUDLY PROCLAIMED TO VARIOUS PARTIES THAT HE WOULD RESIGN RATHER THAN SERVE UNDER ABDULILAH. IN ADDITION, GHAZI REPORTEDLY DISPARAGED OTHER MEMBERS OF DAOUD'S CABINET INCLUDING MINISTER OF INTERIOR ABDUL QADIR (NURISTANI) AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE GHULAM HAIDER RASULI. GHAZI HAS CONTENDED THAT DAOUD, IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE LOYA JIRGAH AND THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION, HAD A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO SET AFGHANISTAN ON A POSITIVE COURSE, BUT THAT THE MARCH 17 REAPPOINTMENT OF THE ABOVE "CRONIES" TO THE CABINET (SEE KABUL 1921) DASHED HOPES FOR AN UPWARD TURN IN THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT.

4. COMMENT: IN OUR VIEW, GHAZI'S FULMINATIONS COULD REFLECT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KABUL 02530 01 OF 02 131654Z

MORE THAN MERELY PIQUE AT BEING OUTMANEUVERED IN THE OMNIPRESENT AFGHAN BUREAUCRATIC INTRIGUE, AND COULD SIGNAL A GENUINE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH DAOUD'S METHODS OF RUNNING THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THE GHAZIS HAVE BEEN THE MOST VOCAL, WE HAVE HEARD ELSEWHERE THAT DISSATISFACTION WITH CERTAIN OF DAOUD'S CABINET MEMBERS -- SPECIFICALLY ABDULILAH, ABDUL QADIR, RASULI, AND MINISTER IN CHARGE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAHEED ABDULLAH -- MAY EXTEND BEYOND THE AFGHAN "ESTABLISHMENT" (WHERE WE BELIEVE OPPOSITION TO THESE FOUR IS WIDESPREAD) TO OTHER LESS INFLUENTIAL STRATA OF SOCIETY. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER DAOUD WILL UTILIMATELY TAKE ANY HEED OF THE GHAZI DISCONTENT -- HE IS NOT A MAN TO RESPOND TO THREATS OF RESIGNATION -- AND TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE AUTHORITY AND VISIBILITY OF THE LESSER LIGHTS AMONG HIS CONFIDANTS.

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PAGE 01 KABUL 02530 02 OF 02 131717Z
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DHA-02 MCT-01 /086 W
-----131829Z 057083 /40

R 130742Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2207
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 2530

5. WE SUSPECT THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL ALLOW THE GHAZI CLAN TO STEW FOR AWHILE, BUT THAT HE MIGHT IN THE END SACRIFICE LOYAL ADVISORS SHOULD THE GHAZI VIEWS OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF HIS ENTOURAGE BECOME TOO WIDELY SHARED.

6. AN IMPORTANT FACT OF RECENT AFGHAN POLITICAL HISTORY IS THAT THE FATHERS OF PRESIDENT DAOUD, THE BROTHERS GHAZI (A THIRD GHAZI BROTHER, COL. ABDUL AZIM MAHMOUD, IS CURRENTLY MILITARY ATTACHE IN MOSCOW), AND FORMER KING ZAHIR WERE THEMSELVES BROTHERS. THE GHAZIS HAVE POLITICAL CLOUD, AND AROUND THEIR DISCONTENT WITH DAOUD'S "CRONIES" (AS SULTAN MAHMOUD WOULD REFER TO THOSE IN THE CABINET HE ESPECIALLY DISLIKES) COULD COALESCE A GOOD DEAL OF "ESTABLISHMENT" DISCONTENT WITH DAOUD'S RUNNING OF THINGS.

7. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF SULTAN MAHMOUD GHAZI'S GOVERNMENT AGENCY IS CONTROL OF ARIANA AIRLINES. IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM WE WILL ANALYZE HOW TRANSFER OF THIS BUSINESS TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE MIGHT AFFECT THE COMPANY AND PAN AMERICAN AIRLINES, A MAJOR STOCKHOLDER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KABUL02530
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770128-0570
Format: TEL
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770462/aaaacbyl.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEHRAN 2901
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2823549
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE GHAZI FAMILY CONFRONTATION WITH DAOUD PALACE GUARD
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/455e35a6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009